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(54) **Low pour crude oil compositions.**

(57) A low pour point crude oil composition is prepared by incorporating in a waxy crude oil an effective pour point depressant amount of an oil soluble ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer or terpolymer. The copolymer or terpolymer is usually added as a solution. In one aspect the invention relates to the pipeline transportation of the low pour crude oil composition.

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LOW POUR CRUDE OIL COMPOSITIONS

This invention relates to low pour crude oil compositions.

Background and Summary of the Invention

Certain waxy, high-pour crude oils are known to have poor pipeline flow characteristics and, in addition, they exhibit a tendency to gel at temperatures encountered during transportation. This tendency is particularly troublesome when a pipeline containing these crudes is shut down under low ambient temperatures.

A number of processes have been suggested in the art for dealing with such flow problems. For example, the pour point of waxy crudes has been improved by the removal of a part of the wax by solvent extraction at low temperatures, with the attendant expense of recovering the solvent, and the problem of disposing of the wax and of providing the cooling requirements, which are substantial. In more recently proposed processes, wax has been removed without the use of a solvent by centrifuging a previously heated crude which has been cooled at a critically controlled and slow rate to a centrifuging temperature of around 35°-55° F.

Another widely practiced process involves cutting the waxy crudes with lighter fractions of hydrocarbons. This process suffers from a number of disadvantages, such as the fact that the procedure involves the use of relatively large amounts of expensive hydrocarbon solvents to transport a relatively cheap product. Furthermore, this practice also necessarily requires that the cutting hydrocarbon solvents be available in suitable quantities which in some instances is inconvenient, and also that there be a ready market for the solvents at the other end of the pipeline.

In another method, heating equipment installed along the pipeline at frequent intervals is utilized to heat the crude and thus reduce its viscosity. Heaters employed for this purpose can be operated by withdrawing from the crudes being transported for use as fuels. As much as 5 percent of the crude may be utilized in providing the heating necessary for reducing the crude oil viscosity to a suitable value. Furthermore, most pipelines are not equipped with such heating installations. Also, there is the additional problem of contamination of the atmosphere when burning crude oils, since they may be difficult to burn completely.

According to this invention, an effective pour point depressant amount of a copolymer or terpolymer of ethylene and acrylonitrile is incorporated in a waxy crude oil to provide a composition having good pipeline flow characteristics and a reduced tendency to gel at temperatures encountered during transportation of such crude oil.

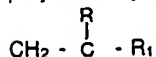
Prior Art

British Patent 787,055 to Esso Research and Engineering Company discloses the use of oil soluble copolymers of ethylene and/or propylene and a nitrogen-containing unsaturated organic compound, such as acrylonitrile as a detergent additive in lubricating oils. The reference further discloses that such copolymers, when modified by a side chain containing 8-18 carbon atoms, may impart additional properties, such as V.I. improving properties or pour point depressing properties in the refined products used as lubricants.

U.S. Patent 4,062,796 to Gardner et al. discloses the use of the reaction product of a polyelectrolytic organic polymer and an organic surfactant to prevent the deposition of scale in aqueous solutions. The organic polymer may be an acrylonitrile copolymer with ethylene or propylene.

U.S. Patent 3,693,720 to McDougall et al. discloses the use of a polymer comprising an ethylene moiety, a nonpolar moiety, such as acrylonitrile, and a polar moiety, such as acrylic acid to inhibit wax deposition on surfaces contacting crude oils.

U.S. Patent 3,832,302 to Lansford et al. discloses a composition for inhibiting scale in an aqueous system formed by the reaction of a water soluble polyelectrolytic organic polymer having a molecular weight from 1,000 to 100,000 and a water-soluble organic cationic surface active compound. The organic polymer may be a copolymer of an olefin, such as ethylene with a compound having the formula



in which R may be hydrogen and R₁ may be a nitrile radical.

Detailed Description of the Invention

The ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers used in this invention may be prepared by polymerization of ethylene and acrylonitrile or by reacting acrylic acid with ethylene and pyrolyzing with ammonia to obtain the copolymer. These copolymers are well known in the art, and procedures for their preparation are readily available. The composition of the copolymers will vary. However, usually the amount of acrylonitrile in the copolymer is between about 1 and about 35 weight percent, and more usually between about 10 and about 20 weight percent.

The ethylene-acrylonitrile terpolymers may be prepared by polymerization of ethylene, acrylonitrile and a third monomer. Third monomers used non-exhaustively include vinyl acetate, carbon monoxide, alkyl acrylates, alkyl methacrylates, alkyl vinyl ethers, vinyl chloride, vinyl fluoride, acrylic acid and methacrylic acid. The various terpolymers used in the compositions of the invention are known in the art as are the procedures for their preparation. The amount of the third monomer in the terpolymers will vary from about 0.1 to about 10 weight percent, but usually is between about 1 and 5 weight percent.

It is possible to modify ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers and terpolymers by adding hydrocarbon side chains to the polymers. However, in the crude oil compositions of this invention the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers and terpolymers are employed without such modification.

Depending on the polymerization conditions used, particularly the temperature of polymerization, the copolymers and terpolymers may vary in melt index as measured by ASTM D1238-E (which is related to molecular weight). The melt index of the copolymers and terpolymers may be from as low as 1 to as high as 4000. More usually the melt index will be between about 1 and about 300.

The ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers and terpolymers are usually solid or semi-solid at room temperature. While it is possible to introduce the copolymer or terpolymer to the waxy crude oil in the form of a solid, it is desirable for ease of handling to place the copolymer or terpolymer in solution before adding it to the waxy crude oil. This may be accomplished through the use of an aromatic solvent, such as toluene or xylene or, if preferred, a refinery stream high in aromatics, such as ethylene cracker bottoms, may be used for this purpose.

Although the crude oil compositions of this invention may be prepared using any crude oil containing wax, the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer and terpolymer pour point depressants are especially effective with high pour waxy crude oils. These copolymers and terpolymers find particular application in waxy crude oils obtained from areas such as India, Egypt and the British North Sea; however, they are useful in other waxy materials.

The amount of the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer or terpolymer incorporated in the crude oil compositions of this invention may be varied over a wide range. Generally, the amount of copolymer or terpolymer in the crude oil composition will be from about 0.1 to about 2000 parts per million by weight, and preferably between about 1 and about 500 parts per million. However, any amount of the copolymer or terpolymer which will provide a reduction in pour point may be used within the scope of the invention.

This invention is especially applicable to the pipelining of waxy crudes over substantial distances, particularly where the pipeline is subject to varying temperature conditions. It is also applicable, however, to situations where crudes are moved over short distances. For example, it may be used in off-loading of offshore platforms, in gathering lines in oil fields and in the storage and transfer of crude oil in refineries.

The following examples illustrate the results obtained in carrying out the invention.

A number of polymers containing a nitrile group (derived from acrylonitrile) were tested as pour point depressants in Bombay High, an Indian crude. One thousand parts per million depressant material was added to the crude which was heated to a temperature of 122° F. The pour point of each crude sample was then determined by ASTM Method D-97.

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TABLE 1

Pour Point Depressant*	Pour Point (° F)
Blank	85
75 Styrene/25 Acrylonitrile	85
68 Styrene/32 Acrylonitrile	80
79 Butadiene/21 Acrylonitrile	90
74 Butadiene/26 Acrylonitrile	85
63 Butadiene/37 Acrylonitrile (Hydrogenated)	85
85 Ethylene/10 Vinyl Acetate/5 Methacrylonitrile	85
69 Ethylene/18 Vinyl Acetate/13 Acrylonitrile	35
82 Ethylene/18 Acrylonitrile	20
84 Ethylene/16 Acrylonitrile	20
85 Ethylene/5 Carbon Monoxide/10 Acrylonitrile	15
79 Ethylene/16 Vinyl Acetate/5 Acrylonitrile	20

*The numbers represent weight percent.

It is noted that the two ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers tested both provided a substantial reduction in pour point. Both of the ethylene-vinyl acetate-acrylonitrile terpolymers also provided a similar reduction as did the terpolymer of ethylene, carbon monoxide and acrylonitrile.

An ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer containing 18 weight percent acrylonitrile (EAN 18) was tested at various concentrations in Bombay High crude in a similar manner. The results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Conc. (ppm)	Pour Point (° F)
0	85
50	45
100	40
250	40
500	35
1000	20

The same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer was compared with Shellswim 5X in Bombay High crude. Shellswim 5X is a pour point depressant provided by Shell Oil Company. One hundred parts per million of each pour point depressant were used in the Bombay High crude which has been heated to 122° F. The results of the comparison are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Pour Point Depressant	Pour Point (° F)
Blank	85
Shellswim 5X*	70
EAN 18	35

*Polyalkylacrylate polymer (containing C-18 to C-22 groups).

The pour point advantage of the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer is apparent from the data.

The same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer was tested in Geisum crude obtained from Egypt at several concentrations. The results are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Conc. (ppm)	Pour Point - ° F EAN 18
0	85
50	60
100	40
250	10

A similar pour point advantage of the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer is seen here also.

The same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer was compared with two other pour point depressants in several Egyptian crudes. 150 parts per million of each material was added to crudes heated to a temperature of 122 ° F. The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

	POUR POINTS (° F)			
	Blank	EAN 18	CF 2315*	Shellswim 11T**
Umbarka	80	75	60	75
Safir	65	20	30	35
Agiba	60	<5	--	<5

*Polymer(s) containing ethylene, vinylacetate, alkyl acrylate and alkyl succinates.

**Vinylpyridine-alkylacrylate copolymer.

The same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer was tested in a number of crudes from North Dakota, The Peoples Republic of China, and the British North Sea. Various concentrations of the copolymer were tested in crudes heated to 165 ° F. The results are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Crude	Conc. (ppm)	POUR POINT (° F)	
		Blank	EAN 18
Henry Fritch*	1000	115	70
Henry Fritch*	50	115	75
DaQuing**	500	95	70
Zohn UAN**	500	95	80
Liao He**	100	75	40
Hua Bei**	100	100	80
Beatrice***	250	85	35

*North Dakota.

**Peoples Republic of China.

***British North Sea.

The same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer was tested for gel strength in Bombay and Safir crudes, along with two Shell materials (Shellswim 5X and Shellswim 11T). Pertinent test data and results are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Crude	PPD	Conc. (ppm)	Prep. Temp. (° F)	Dynamic Cooling (to ° F)	Hold Temp. (° F)	Gel Strength (lbs/100 ft)
Bombay	--	--	122	98	68	312.0
Bombay	EAN 18	100	122	98	68	1.7
Bombay	Shellswim 5X	150	122	98	68	5.2
Safir	--	--	140	60	32	365.0
Safir	EAN 18	100	140	60	32	130.3
Safir	Shellswim 11T	250	140	60	32	195.5

It is noted from the data that the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer, even in lower concentrations, provided better gel strength than the two Shell materials.

Wax depositions studies were made on Bombay High crude with the same ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer and two other materials: Ethylene-vinylacetate-methacrylic acid terpolymer and Shellswim 5X. The results are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

PPD	Conc. (ppm)	Wax Reduction (Percent)
EAN 18	1000	90
EAN 18	50	80
EAN 18	10	20
Ethylene-vinylacetate-methacrylic acid terpolymer	1000	50
Shellswim 5X	1000	33

The data in Table 8 indicates the superiority of the ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymer as a paraffin deposition inhibitor.

Four ethylene-acrylonitrile copolymers were prepared. The composition of the copolymers and their melt indices are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Sample No.	Ethylene Weight Percent	Acrylonitrile Weight Percent	Melt Index
1	94.5	5.5	3
2	89.0	11.0	8
3	84.0	16.0	40
4	69.0	31.0	>100

The above copolymers were tested for pour point in a number of crudes obtained from around the world. The results of the tests are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10

	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Crude</u>	<u>PPM</u>	<u>Temp. (°F)</u>	<u>Pour Point (°F)</u>
5					
	1	Bombay	1000	74	85
	2	Bombay	1000	74	50
	3	Bombay	1000	74	40
	4	Bombay	1000	74	35
10	1	Bombay	200	50	80
	2	Bombay	200	50	70
	3	Bombay	200	50	55
	4	Bombay	200	50	80
	2	Bombay	200	74	70
15	3	Bombay	200	74	50
	4	Bombay	200	74	75
		Ecopetrol ⁽¹⁾			
	2	Ecopetrol	50	40	75
	3	Ecopetrol	50	40	45
20	4	Ecopetrol	50	40	75
	3	Ecopetrol	10	46	75
	3	Ecopetrol	50	46	70
	3	Ecopetrol	100	46	35
	2	Ecopetrol	100	46	65
25	3	Ecopetrol	100	46	15
	4	Ecopetrol	100	46	65
	3	Ecopetrol ⁽²⁾	250	46	-30
		Marathon			
	3	Marathon	1000	70	80
30	3	Marathon	1500	70	70
	3	Kotter ⁽³⁾	50	74	45
	3	Kotter ⁽⁴⁾	500	74	55
		Dulang ⁽⁴⁾			95
	3	Dulang	1000	60	100
35	4	Dulang	1000	60	100
		Myton ⁽⁵⁾			45
	3	Myton	1000	46	-10
	4	Myton	1000	46	-10
		Daqing			80
40	3	Daqing ⁽⁶⁾	1000	60	60
		Delhi ⁽⁶⁾			70
	3	Delhi	1000	60	70
	4	Delhi	1000	60	70
	3	Delhi	200	46	65
45	2	Delhi	200	46	70
	4	Delhi ⁽⁷⁾	200	46	70
		Kalda ⁽⁷⁾			75
	3	Kalda	1000	60	25
	4	Kalda	1000	60	40
		New Zealand			85
50	2	New Zealand	1000	46	85
	3	New Zealand	1000	46	85
	4	New Zealand	1000	46	85
		Ewing Banks ⁽⁸⁾			40
55	2	Ewing Banks	1000	46	20

	3	Ewing Banks	1000	46	10
	4	Ewing Banks	1000	46	-20
5		Myton Station		80/46	100
	3	Myton Statio	1000	80/46	100
	4	Myton Statio	1000	80/46	100
		LSWR ⁽⁹⁾			125
	3	LSWR	1000	60	125
10	4	LSWR	1000	60	125
		Dickinson ⁽¹⁰⁾			95
	3	Dickinson	1000	60	50
	4	Dickinson	1000	60	50
15	(1)	Columbia			
	(2)	Tunisia			
	(3)	British North Sea			
	(4)	Peoples Republic of China			
	(5)	Utah			
20	(6)	India			
	(7)	Egypt			
	(8)	Gulf Coast - USA			
	(9)	Malaysia - Low sulfur resid			
25	(10)	North Dakota			

Claims

- 30 1. A crude oil composition having improved pour point characteristics comprising a waxy crude oil and an effective pour point depressant amount of an additive consisting essentially of a polymer selected from the group consisting of copolymers and terpolymers of ethylene and acrylonitrile.
2. A composition as claimed in claim 1 in which the polymer is a copolymer containing from about 1 to about 35 weight percent acrylonitrile.
- 35 3. A composition as claimed in claim 2 in which the amount of copolymer present is between about 0.1 and about 2000 parts per million by weight.
4. A composition as claimed in claim 1 in which the polymer is a terpolymer containing from about 1 to about 35 weight per cent acrylonitrile, from about 0.1 to about 10 weight percent of a third monomer and the remainder ethylene.
- 40 5. A composition as claimed in claim 4 in which the amount of terpolymer is between about 0.1 and about 1000 parts per million by weight.
6. A composition as claimed in claim 3 or claim 6 in which the melt index of the copolymer or terpolymer is between about 1 and about 4000.
7. A composition as claimed in claim 1 in which the polymer is a terpolymer of ethylene, acrylonitrile and vinyl acetate.
- 45 8. A composition as claimed in claim 1 in which the polymer is a terpolymer of ethylene, acrylonitrile and carbon monoxide.
9. A method of transportation of waxy crude oil through a pipeline, characterised by incorporating in said crude oil an effective pour point depressant amount of an additive consisting essentially of a polymer selected from the group consisting of copolymers and terpolymers of ethylene and acrylonitrile.
- 50 10. A method as claimed in claim 9 in which the said polymer is as defined in any one of claims 2 to 8.
11. A process for improving the pour point characteristics of a waxy crude oil which comprises incorporating in said crude oil an effective pour point depressant amount of an additive consisting essentially of a polymer selected from the group consisting of copolymers and terpolymers of ethylene and acrylonitrile.
- 55 12. A process as claimed in claim 11 in which the said polymer is as defined in any one of claims 2 to 8.



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
X	FR-A-2 073 842 (SHELL) * Claims; pages 3-4; page 9, lines 16-22; page 10, line 27 - page 11, line 1 *	1-3,9-12	C 10 L 1/22 F 17 D 1/16
A	---	7	
D,X	US-A-3 693 720 (McDOUGALL et al.) * Whole document *	1,2,4,9-12	
A	---	7	
X	EP-A-0 061 696 (HOECHST AG) * Claims; pages 1-3 *	1-6,11,12	
A	---	7,8	
X	FR-A-1 320 959 (ESSO) * Whole document, in particular column 2, line 26 *	1-3,9-12	
A	---	7	
D,A	GB-A- 787 055 (ESSO) * Whole document *	1-12	
A	---		TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)
A	GB-A-2 026 025 (I.F.P. et al.) * Whole document *	1-12	C 10 L F 17 D
A	FR-A-2 292 720 (WACKER-CHEMIE GmbH) * Claims; page 5, line 18 - page 6, line 8 *	1,2,4,7	F 15 D C 08 F

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 13-09-1989	Examiner DE LA MORINERIE B.M.S.B.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	